2: Gervis T-3 (no date) 1954 AV1 Kashmir AV1

to that centre, and here a few could still be bribed out. It was known that a large percentage would never return to their families. The years thinned the breadwinners, the fields were tended and the crops gathered by the old and very young.

The hundreds of coolies were collected together at Bandipura; here they were loaded up with the sacks of food for the garrison, loads which were two and even three times the recognised pack of fifty pounds. In addition to this they had to carry their own rations, these being about two pounds of rice per day, a carrying crutch, a frame of sticks, rope for the back load, and topping all, a bundle of straw with which to make the straw shoes they would need. Their clothes and protection consisted of whatever they had brought for themselves; most had somehow managed to bring a blanket. It is little wonder that dozens died on the way, as they crossed the snow passes, slipped on the rough track, or dropped from weakness and exposure.

The dreadful thing was that even when they eventually reached Gilgit there was always the chance that they would be sold into slavery or captured by the tribesmen of that part. Tyndale-Biscoe tells of the grandfather of one of his servants, who had been forced to make this march, being exchanged for a Chinese dog; later he escaped and somehow managed to return to the Valley to tell his story. And it was not unusual for those fortunate ones who were returning to be press-ganged again to carry loads that dead or sick men in caravans following had dropped; whilst there was no assurance that next year they might not again be taken.

Then the threat of the Russian advance into India through Kashmir caused the Government of India to take over this Gilgit garrison, and in order to ensure maintenance of lines of communication, in 1891 a military road was made between Gilgit and Bandipura, the place where the coolies had been loaded, for there already existed a road as far as that town. The making of the road in those days was a great engineering achievement in the short space of time that it took. Pathans from the North-West Frontier were used for the work, at times they worked with spade in the hand and rifle at their elbow, the way being through tribal areas where the peoples resented the

2: Biscoe · M-3 (1890-ca. 1920) 1922 AV4 Kashmiri A V4
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Ki 539 mounted; and the horse, which could have carried one, became so exhausted under the weight of three, that, on reaching his stable, he died."

The application of the story is obvious enough, and is a good illustration of the natural wit of the Kashmiris.

Kr 708 651 Ki 651 There was another matter which troubled them much, and that was the forced labour on the Gilgit road. Gilgit, an outpost to the north of Kashmir, 200 miles from Srinagar, was garrisoned by Kashmir troops. It is situated in a foodless region, so the troops had to be fed from the Kashmir Valley. No road had been made there, so all the supplies had to be carried by coolies. These men were collected from the villages with the aid of press-gangs. The sepoys always brought in more than were required so that those who had money could buy themselves off their hands.

Kr [708] ● 567 651 Ki 651 567 At Bandipore they were collected and loaded up. The only rations allowed them was a seer of rice per day; this they had to carry, plus the straw for making their straw shoes, plus their load of food for the garrison. No provision was made for them as they crossed the snow passes, so that many died on the road, and often it happened that when they did reach Gilgit they were sold as slaves to the wild inhabitants of that inhospitable region. The grandfather of one of my servants, who was sent there, was exchanged for a Chinese dog, but later on he escaped.

000 Dr Arthur Neve, in his book, *Thirty Years in Kashmir*, writes:

"To the Englishman the word Gilgit should recall the many gallant deeds of the nineties—the capture of Hunza, the relief of Chitral, and the Pamir Commission. During the last half-century Kashmir is the only Indian native state that has increased in area. And the increase